

NK2852
S18 E



*The
Mary Ann Beinecke
Decorative Art
Collection*

STERLING
AND FRANCINE
CLARK
ART INSTITUTE
LIBRARY



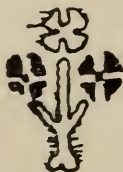
Italian Peasant Rugs

MONOGRAPHS ON THE DECORATIVE ARTS

To be published:

- N. 2. - ALDO RAVÀ — *Venetian Porcelain.*
› 3. - V. DE TOLDO — *The Italian Art bookbinding.*
› 4. - L. DE MAURI — *Vinovo Porcelain.*
› 5. - Prof. LORENZETTI — *Italian pewter.*
› 6. - L. DE MAURI — *Deruta maiolica.*
› 7. - G. FOGOLARI — *Renascence Venetian Frames.*
› 8. - Prof. G. CAPITÒ — *The Sicilian "Carretto",,*

Each volume will be published in three editions
in Italian - French and English



Direction in Milan: Via del Senato, 8 A

MONOGRAPHS ON THE DECORATIVE ARTS

Italian Peasant Rugs

by

Albert Sautier

▽

1

△

Published by "Gli Editori PIANTANIDA - VALCARENGHI"

MCMXXIII

Rights of reproduction in all countries reserved,
including Sweden and Norway.

Copyright 1923 by "Gli Editori Piantanida - Valcarenghi"



I.

THIS book is not meant either for ethnographers or historians of art. At present, it would be either premature or perhaps even quite impossible to speak scientifically and exhaustively on the textile art of Italian peasants. Premature, because we are without any kind of preparatory or specific work on the single branches of the regional and local production. The materials published till now, and scattered here and there in various Italian reviews, with the exception of the series of articles published by Giulio Arata in the *Dedalo* (II Year. NN. XI-XII and II Year. N. II) represent the literary toil of enthusiastic *dilettanti* rather than an effort of precise research. Even the special number of the "Studio", named *Peasant Art in Italy*, so precious because of its many and excellent illustrations, only gives us slight information in the text concerning our special subject. A scientific investigation into the textile art of Italian peasants meets with the same difficulties (and perhaps in a greater degree) as those that make the task of exactly determining the origin and the antiquity of oriental textiles so immensely hard. Concerning these difficulties, we may affirm that it is perhaps too late to write the history of the textile art

of Italian peasants. Except in Sardinia and a few country places in Calabria, as Gimigliano and Longobucco, the home production of woven stuffs has almost either completely ceased, or has given up all claim to being artistic, while even in the still flourishing centres of production, it is difficult to discern clearly marked local characteristics. This, of course, implies a great difficulty in determining exactly the origin of the woven stuffs found in private collections or at antiquaries', and especially of products of the Abruzzi or of Mola. An enormous quantity of rugs and covers must certainly have been destroyed, the materials having been much exposed to the voracity of moths, and these rustic textiles, until quite recent times, having failed to arouse the interest of antiquaries or art amateurs. We can infer this from the comparison of the few remains preserved to us with the exuberant quantity of Calabrian covers remaining, these having been protected, thanks to the quality of the materials (silk and silk waste) from the insidious damage of moths, and for the same reason, treated with greater consideration both by the owners and the antiquarians.

Besides this, for the Italian Peasant Art, we completely lack that resource which has proved so useful in determining the antiquity of Oriental rugs: namely, their reproduction in the works of contemporary painters. We do, it is true, find also woven stuffs of indisputable Italian origin in the pictures of the XV and XVI centuries, but they are either of damask velvet or brocade, or of stuffs divided into stripes of different colours, but not wrought into patterns. The aim we have before us in writing these pages is to prepare the way for a fairer aesthetic valuation of the finest products of Italian popular art. There is such an immense wealth of treasures of Italian art, and, until a few years ago, the modest proofs of the aesthetic sensitivity of the humblest of our people failed in attracting wide attention. It was the regional exhibitions of Siena, Perugia and Chieti, and the great exhibition of the artistic activity of the several Italian provinces, held at Rome

in 1911, which roused some interest in these unknown and unobserved treasures. It was this last exhibition which gave rise to the article in the "Studio,, already mentioned. And here we must remember the unwearied labour of him who, from the remotest corners of Abruzzo, of Calabria and of Sardinia, gathered together all the objects belonging to the peasant's ancient house-carpets, bed-covers, majolica, wood-work, articles of furniture and costumes, which formed the most precious part of this exhibition. Although it was rather an interest in folk-lore than in art which guided him in his choice, the collection which was the result of the admirable activity of Lamberto Loria is, along with the Ethnographical Museum, founded by Pitré at Palermo, the richest public exhibition of Italian peasant art existing. We say *public exhibition*, in hopes that the adaptation of the Salesian convent on the Palatine to an ethnographical museum may soon be an accomplished fact, and that the marvels of the Loria collection, buried for ten years in the underground regions of the Gallery of Modern Art, may at last return and reveal all their ingenuous grace.

In 1920, finally, the exhibition of decorative art at Stockholm, in which Peasant Art had the place assigned to it which it deserved, was for foreign countries an exceptional surprise. Sweden, who also possesses a branch of Peasant Art, both rich and original, to which, for many decades, she has dedicated love and fervid study worthy of being imitated, was able to appreciate all the beauty especially of the woven woollen stuffs of the Abruzzi, and the success of this exhibition had a loud echo also in Italy – so loud as to encourage the architect, Marcello Piacentini, in the spring of 1921, to dedicate to Peasant Art three rooms in the Roman Biennial Exhibition.



II.

ACCORDING to the custom now adopted, we, by the term “tappeti rustici,, mean to design a group of woven stuffs among which carpets or rugs have but a small place. For, those which are generally called “tappeti abruzzesi,,, are not real carpets, and, considering the technique of their workmanship, they could scarcely be used to cover a floor, but are table-covers, bed-covers or covers for benches, especially used to cover nuptial chests. The oblong and rectangular surface of the chests and old tables explains why, these covers, if not meant to be used as bed-covers, have almost always the form of a strip, three metres and even more in length. In spite of the inexactitude of the old term, we think it better to continue using it, in order to avoid narrowing or widening the limits of our discussion too much.

The variety in the technique used by the Italian peasant women is most surprising. Along with the rugs woven simply in small patterns, common in Sardinia, and those manufactured in Umbria, in Ciociaria and in Apulia of silk waste and rags, which, notwithstanding their humble nature, often reveal a fine taste for colour effect, we find others woven like Caramania, or “double-face,,

tapestry, as well as knotted rugs similar to Persian products. These two last kinds of technique however, judging from the rarity of the specimens preserved, were only exceptionally used, and we cannot in any case affirm with certainty where such workmanship was practised. One most original specimen, beautifully preserved and wrought in the Caramania manner, (the most ancient technique formerly used among the ancient Egyptians and also among the Incas and the Atzecs in Perù and Mexico) is found at an antiquary's in Rome. It is a strip, 4,80 metres in length, and 98 centimetres wide, decorated with narrow rows across of different colours. Every now and again, this uniform pattern is interrupted by strips, 25 centimetres in width and at a distance of about half a metre from each other, these being woven *à la Caramania* (double-face tapestry). These strips are decorated with rigidly formalistic figures, of two-headed eagles, winged heads, dragons, vases, wild men and other purely heraldic motives, which, as we shall see later, form an essential part of the decoration of the most ancient covers of Pescocostanzo. The perfect technical workmanship, equal to the aesthetic beauty of the design, is an evident proof of great familiarity with tapestry technique. It would, however, be premature to conclude from this, that in Abruzzo there existed a centre for the manufacture of stuffs resembling tapestry. We must rather consider the strip described as a specimen of the isolated activity of one weaver, some emigrant from Flanders or the East, who, inspired by local motives, reproduced them according to the technique familiar to him. Such an hypothesis would give a semblance of probability to a tradition still extant in Pescocostanzo, according to which, certain Turkish or Cyprian female slaves, interned about 1600 at Pescocostanzo, taught the population there a highly perfected textile art. That we really have here a piece of Abruzzo work results, not only from the analogy of the decorative elements, but also from the arrangement of the piece in horizontal stripes, typical of other woven products of the Italian peasant art of the time, but never used in the Flemish

tapestry of the period, while the antique Caramania hangings have only purely geometrical designs.

In Sardinia, at the present time, they still manufacture rugs, in imitation of double-face tapestry (a technique however in use also among the Swedish and Norwegian peasantry) but there we have simple copies of oriental work—*chelims* or *Caramania*—an industry of recent importation. Another specimen of very primitive workmanship is represented by a wall-hanging displayed in the Abruzzese Exhibition of Chieti and which is the private property of a family of Pescocostanzo. It consists in a mosaic of pieces of stuff joined together on a piece of linen, a kind of technique used also in the East, in Northern Persia and in Minor Asia. In this special case, we have evidently an economical and rustic reproduction of a piece of tapestry. On it, we find a representation of the taking of Troy. The subject itself, the composition, the unusual dimensions of the stuff, (absolutely typical of 16th century tapestry) are sure proofs of this rug not being a pure creation of peasant art. On the other hand, however, the ingenuous style of some of the figures, and certain elements of the decoration reveal the hand of a peasant artist. This piece of pseudo-tapestry is to be attributed to the first half of the sixteenth century.

Worthy of note is the fact that also velvety carpets or rugs knotted in the oriental manner, were manufactured by Italian peasants. Some time ago, I remarked that, in a group of woollen covers of indisputable Italian origin, woven with the usual technique which we shall describe later on, were to be found on the narrow sides one or two transverse stripes not simply woven but knotted on the weft, and forming a pile about a centimetre in height. Once proved that this technique was known to the rustic Italian weavers, it was logical to suppose that also entire rugs had been made in this way, all the more so, as the great importation into Italy of oriental knotted rugs must have been a stimulus to imitation. A happy chance allowed me to discover at a Roman antiquary's, along

with two covers wrought with the usual technique and also displaying the two knotted transverse stripes, two rugs, which, according to the declaration of the dealer, were of the same origin as the covers.

These rugs, the best preserved of which is reproduced in table No I, were not only of the same dimensions as the other two (m. 3×110) with the woof formed of the same thin white woollen threads, but their wide upper and under borders were formed by transverse bands woven like tapestry with a zig-zag motive, and the usual knotted stripes alternately. The principal part of the rugs was wrought wholly in the Persian style with a deep pile formed by threads knotted on the web. That these are imported oriental rugs must be excluded. If one can recognize in the border of the rug reproduced on table No I a certain affinity with Chinese rugs, and in the pattern of the other a likeness to those of Minor Asia called Yürük or Montagnard, the coarse and primitive fashion of the knotting (only 240 knots every square decimeter against 1800 in the Chinese rugs, or 800-1000 of the Yürük) a sign of little practice, as well as the quality of the wool used for the woof, reveals a totally different manufacture. Notwithstanding this, the undeniable analogies they possess with the two kinds of oriental rugs mentioned, prove that such rugs must have been used as models by the Italian weavers who made the two we have described. The pile in both rugs is almost as high as that of a Smyrna carpet, and as glossy as silk (especially beautiful are the reflexes of the pale blue ground, and of the golden yellow pattern), and they are made of sheep's wool. The predominating hues are blue, yellow, wine-red, and a bright orange. Splendid and audacious in conception is the pattern in the specimen reproduced in table No I. The central space is completely filled with the design, five times repeated of a strange ribbon running zig-zag, branching out into little hooks which may represent a formalisation of the famous Chinese decorative motive called

“tsci,, (or a line of clouds) frequently repeated in old Persian rugs and in those of Asia Minor. The border is very simple, between two orange — coloured stripes and decorated with a most original variation of the meander, a motive also frequently found in Chinese rugs. Worthy of note is the fact that, contrary to the rule constantly observed in all Eastern webs, the centre and the borders offer no contrast of colours; the ground and the pattern of both show the same hues. This corresponds perfectly with the aesthetic canon observed in every product of peasant textile art in Italy.

These woven stuffs of the Italian peasantry do not mean to give us a mosaic of colours (and this explains the slight attraction that the technique used in tapestry has had for them), but they present a ground of a single colour animated by their fancy with an intermingling of lines and colours. These velvety Italian rugs, though inferior as regards perfection of workmanship, from the aesthetic point of view, can be compared to their advantage with the finest Persian textile fabrics. Their pattern entirely attains the modern ideal of the so-called abstract art (in which we seem to recognize a secret longing for applied art, along with an evident technical incapacity) without, however, falling into the monotonous lack of fancy which characterizes, for example, the Turcoman rugs and those of Bokhara. Another specimen of the Italian velvety or knotted rug, known to me, is to be seen at Rome in Dr. Wagner's collection. The characteristics of the technique seen in it are identical with those in the two specimens already mentioned: namely, the knotting at wide distances, (240 knots to every square decimeter) the quality of the wool used in the warp, and the high glossy pile.

It, too, has the ground of a single colour — a light indigo blue, in the centre as well as in the wide border: only a narrow edge around the latter has a Bordeaux-red ground. The pattern in the centre in white, pale green, cream-colour, and wine-red presents strange ramifications of a vegetal motive so formalized as to be

unrecognisable. Through the two borders runs a zig-zag line which is purely Italian. It would be difficult to find anything even vaguely resembling this rug in any of the Eastern products. Its maker has already completely freed himself from all foreign influence.

But the technique, most commonly diffused and preferred by the Italian women peasants, among the different kinds used by them, and that with which they have produced the famous rugs of Pescocostanzo, their woollen covers, the silk covers of Calabria, their chest — and table — covers, aprons and wallets, and which may be considered as typically indigenous, is one half-way between embroidery and the system of weaving employed in the manufacture of the Caucasian rugs called Soumac. On a superficial glance, one is inclined to consider all these woven stuffs with a ground of a single colour and a pattern in slight relief as embroidery.

But this first impression is wrong. The ground and the design are formed at the same time. Everywhere in Italy, these pieces of work are still being carried out, for instance in Sardinia, or at Longobucco in Calabria, and anyone can have the opportunity of convincing himself of this with his own eyes. Anyhow, a closer examination of these woven stuffs is enough to confute the opinion, so insistently put forward, that it is a question of simple embroidery. The method most employed in the manufacture of those articles is the following. Between one shoot of the thread and the next (which form the ground) the design is inserted between the threads of the warp, catching up either the one or the other according to the arrangement of the colours over the whole width of the woof. The pattern being ended on all the width, the shuttle with the thread of the background is thrown through the threads of the border, the balls of the coloured threads of the pattern are again taken up, and the same movement is repeated. This technique differs from that used in the Soumac in so far as the threads of the

pattern are not broken off every time it is finished, between one, thread of the woof and another, but are left hanging down and taken up again, every time the design requires it. This explains why the threads forming the pattern run on the back of the rug alternately or parallel to the threads of the warp or the woof. The women-weavers of Calabria are acquainted with and exercise a whole series of complicated variations of such a technique on which we do not mean to linger, but, in any case, the ground and the pattern are carried out contemporaneously. The latter is never embroidered after on a ground, already completed. This workmanship has certainly the advantage over simple embroidery of being much more solid.

We must now mention another way of weaving, employed sporadically in various regions, but preferably in Sardinia and Calabria, above all for the making of bed-covers, which, woven in this manner, resemble uncut velvet not of silk but of wool or hemp. The threads of the woof are drawn over pins which are then pulled out. The design thus formed stands out in clear relief against the flat ground. With such a relief, this technique is preferred for white covers. Occasionally, however the design is executed also in dark colours: dark blue, dark red, and black. Endowed with exquisite chromatic taste, the female weaver avoided accentuating the relief through contrast of colours. Polychromatic specimens do exist indeed, but they are exceedingly rare and are proofs of a modern taste already corrupted through foreign influences.

The materials, employed by the women of the peasantry in weaving, vary according to the use to which the article is destined. Also the local production of raw materials and the climate have a decisive part in the choice. While in Abruzzo, rich in flocks and exposed to the severity of a harsh climate, heavy sheep's wool was almost exclusively employed, in Calabria and in Sicily, under a milder sky, textile fabrics of raw silk or silk-waste (*bavella* or *capisciola*) were preferred, often however mixed with cotton, especially in recent

times. In Calabria, a thread is made very like jute out of the fibres of broom. Romagna almost exclusively produced linen. In Sardinia, woven woollen stuffs prevail or wool mixed with cotton. Sardinian wool nowever, is of a quality much inferior to that of Abruzzo and is easily distinguished from it by the touch.

From the point of view of the colours, we must divide the Italian peasant textile fabrics, like those of the East, into two categories clearly separated; namely those made before, and those made after, the introduction of aniline colours. The importation of chemical colours marks, also in Italy, the beginning of an irreparable decadence, not only owing to the deficient quality of the dyes, but also in the corruption of taste in chromatic composition. The worst damage lay in the forsaking of the time-old methods of dyeing on the basis of organic colours, which were at last completely forgotten. And this, along with others which we shall weigh by – and – bye, is one of the most serious obstacles to the resumption of Italian peasant textile art. They know scarcely any of the old recipes for the dyeing of thread. A pale green was got from the extract of beech and ash leaves, blue from indigo, yellow from saffron, red from the dregs of pressed grapes. This last colour, however, though very beautiful, owing to the acids it contains, is apt to decompose and corrode the threads it dyes like the black of the old oriental rugs. The use of gold and silver threads (imitation) prevailing of late especially in Sardinia, is never found in antique woven stuffs. The older the rugs are, the more limited is their chromatic scale. Violet is never found in them and orange very rarely. The oldest works of peasant art confine themselves to white, to a brie – kred and to two shades of blue. Later, there were added a bottle-green, a rusty brown, black and a very bright yellow. A wine-red colour does not appear until about the second half of the eighteenth century.

There are particular difficulties in determining even the approximative period in which the specimens of peasant art, handed down to us,

were produced, and it would be a daring undertaking to attempt to write their history. The weakness of the wool, the *patina* which age gives to the colours - precious indications for the collector - offer but too vague and often misleading elements of judgment, as the time taken for such a process of ageing may be very unequal in different circumstances. It is no less dangerous to found one's judgment on analogies of style, even in the very rare cases in which these can be recognized, when we consider the long process of infiltration of stylistic formulas from a higher to a lower stratum of society, and from the town to the country, as well as the conservative tradition characteristic of all popular art. I, for instance, possess a cover wrought with figures of animals heraldically formalized, of a purely Gothic character, and directly connected with the absurd figures of the most ancient table-cloths of Perugia and Assisi; but, among these heraldic animals, are found two "putti", in pure sixteenth century style, and four men dressed in a costume used in the first years of the seventeenth. The costume, at least, may give us a sure indication to settle that the cover cannot have been woven before a given period, even though the fashion lasts, as we know, much longer in the country than in town. The inscriptions, which are often enough met with, would naturally be very important, but unhappily, they scarcely ever give exact dates. They contain, almost exclusively, the name of the peasant-woman, who wove the rug, and that of its owner, when they are not confined to simple initials. The longest I have been able to find is the following: (N)om(ine) Jesu. Domenica (of) Nicola Bascador, which exists on the upper border of an Abruzzese nuptial chest-cover. The form of the letters used may sometimes afford a chronological indication of some importance.



III.

NOTWITHSTANDING the afore-mentioned exhibitions, there is still such general ignorance on the subject of peasant art, that even very well known writers on art have either considered it, even lately, to be a rough imitation and rustic vulgarisation of the great art of the Renaissance, or put it on the same level as the childish lisp of Negro art; both opinions being equally inexact. Italian peasant art — and, among its creations, its woven stuffs hold the highest position — has scarcely any point of contact with the applied art practised during the Renaissance, or in the “barocco,” period in the courts and cities of Italy. Its roots go much deeper. Italian popular art has a development of its own, a history apart from any other, a treasury of most original forms. It is this art which represents pure Italian art, free from any foreign influence whatsoever, the natural development of a purely indigenous style, as the dialect and not the literary language of a country represents the natural development of its speech.

While Renaissance applied art borrows the most of its decorative elements from Greco-Roman Art (furniture, bronzes, marbles) from the Siculo-Arabian Art, or Hispano-Morisco (majolicas, brocades,

damasks and velvets) none of such elements succeed in penetrating into our peasant art. By this affirmation, we in no wise mean to depreciate the value of the wonderfully pure creations of ancient art or that of the cities of Florence, Venice, Milan and Rome. At the same time, however, it is undeniable that a rustic piece of maiolica of the 16th century often reveals a clearer intuition of the possibilities inherent in the material and a finer sense of the limits imposed by it, than a work of Benvenuto Cellini, who, to create a salt-cellar, disturbs the whole of Olympus and exhausts all the elements of the decorative art of his time, or the products of the manufactories of maiolica in Urbino which, instead of being plates, are mediocre copies of Raphaelesque pictures. To cover chests with cycles of illusory paintings, to carve on them mythological tales, or to decorate bronze utensils with battles of giants, may inform us of the measure of the artist's knowledge or of his profession, but manifests at the same time the incurable aberration of his taste. From this excess of fantasy over the aesthetic possibilities inherent in the materials used, the art of the people keeps itself completely free and therefore attains, along with greater practicality, a simplicity of lines and outlines very pleasing to the eye. Unfortunately, there are still many good people who put forward the curious postulate of naturalism, not only for what concerns "pure art...,, but also in applied art; admiring, for instance, a plate of Urbino for its correct aerial perspective, or a Venetian bronze inkstand for the naturalness of the faun standing, who knows why? at its side. Such friends of art will wisely abstain from occupying themselves with peasant art: they would be too often scandalized in finding everything coarse, badly drawn, disproportionate, and falsely composed. This homely art created its manifestations for surroundings different from those in which the artists in the court of Ludovic Sforza or of Lorenzo the Magnificent worked, and it was precisely the modesty of their atmosphere which preserved them from that exuberance which exists at the expense of the intrinsic beauty of the material used, and of the limits

imposed by it, as well as of the practical nature of the object to be created.

A product of applied art, not corresponding to the purpose for which it is made cannot be really beautiful, and we shall always consider it as a failure and an encumbrance. Even if the rustic textures are wanting in that beauty of material which distinguishes the brocades, damasks and velvets of the Renaissance period, the peasant women who wove them at Pescocostanzo or Castel di Sangro, have succeeded in revealing all the grace concealed in the poor materials at their disposal. What has struck us most, in our close study of Italian peasant art, is precisely its impenetrability to the influence of the decorative motives common in ancient art or in that of the cities, whether in the sixteenth, seventeenth, or eighteenth century. In the rugs of Pescocostanzo, we see, indeed, traces of such an influence in the representations of syrens, centaurs, unicorns, and of the fountain of love; but such motives are anterior to the Renaissance, and the weavers of Abruzzo may have drawn them from the same source as the artists of the sixteenth century, namely, from Flemish and French tapestry. Arpino seems to have been the centre of the manufacture of thick woven, woollen' stuffs for rugs, wrought in a pattern which recalls that of sixteenth century damasks, but the connection is no closer than that between the damasks and the sumptuous silk products of Persia; and at Castel di Sangro, too, we find a production of long strips with motives typically "barocco", wrought according to the same technique and with the materials commonly employed in the peasant rugs of Abruzzo. But these few cases exhaust the points of contact between two worlds, completely different. And even in these, we cannot speak of a rough imitation, vulgarizing "great", art, but at the most, of the simplifying of a happy adaptation to a different material and different surroundings.

More important, perhaps, is the affinity between the Italian peasant style and that of the popular art in other countries. Certain analogies

in the woven stuffs of the Swedish peasants are obvious. Omitting the size of the articles, explained by the analogous use to which they are put, we find in them common geometrical motives, for instance, a star with eight points and the division of the separate spaces by a lozenge design. Such resemblances, however, are quite casual and dependent on the material which, from its nature, imposes the use of a formalized common style: the spirit prevailing in the work is different. The style in the Swedish woven fabrics has something mechanical, something too orderly, too logical about it. In the Italian textiles, instead, there is a manifestation of richer fancy, of a more individual life, a more luxuriant ornamental vegetation. Above all, they testify to an infinitely finer chromatic sensibility. In any case, the analogies of style between Swedish textiles and ours, are more visible in Sardinian rugs than in those of Abruzzo, which, aesthetically and technically, represent the best products of Italian peasant art. Any oriental influence whatsoever on the genesis of the ornamental elements in Italian rustic art, is to be almost totally excluded, excepting only that found in knotted rugs which form a separate industry by themselves.

The one motive of undoubted eastern origin, the representation of two animals in formalized style, standing opposite each other, separated by the tree of life, a motive which is very frequent in the rugs of south Abruzzo, is so much transformed by an original interpretation, as only to recall its foreign origin in the vaguest way. To try, for example, to prove the influence of Persian hunting-rugs in the one produced on table No. V because in it there are representation of animals and trees, would mean forcing a comparison to absurd extremes. Not only the decorative elements, but also the aesthetic rules which find a manifestation in eastern and in Italian textiles, are radically different, as we have already had occasion to prove. Italian peasant rugs, therefore, possess a style of their own, which either excludes all foreign influence, or transforms it so as to render it unrecognizable, making it all its own; it having most

original decorative elements and chromatic sensibility. This style is principally founded on the special qualities of the materials used. Any material whatsoever has its own immanent laws which cannot be transgressed with impunity. The limits opposed by the material to the free activity of the artist's fancy form the element which determines the style. In knowing how to recognise and respect such limits, not in surpassing them, does the artist reveal his aesthetic sensibility. This explains also the decadence of oil-painting which knows no such limits. Weaving being based on a system of threads crossing at right angles, it naturally leads to a formalized style, the fundamental principle of which is the straight line. In fact, we scarcely ever see a curve appear in Italian peasant textile art. The volutes, the arabesques, the palms, so familiar to us in Persian textile art and in European textures influenced by it, are absolutely wanting in ours, being substituted by rhomboids and zig-zag lines. Such a lack of these elements may be considered as a sign of primitiveness; I should rather call it purity of style; which purity is protected by a tradition still alive, which gives to our peasant art its conservative character but has also preserved it till modern times from aberrations of taste. The individuality of the artist, without completely renouncing itself, subordinated itself to tradition, satisfied with contributing a stone to the construction of that admirable monument called style — the work of centuries — instead of presuming to build a hut with its own strength. This style, based on the straight line, naturally makes no effort to produce the illusion of a third dimension created by the "valeurs,, in contrast with the Gobelins, or, to remain in the limits of our subject, the art of the people, with the *mesere* of Genoa; the Abruzzo rug does not mean to give a woven picture, but only tries to animate a plane surface with a pattern, and not destroy it by creating the illusion of depth: it means, that is, to be only a rug and nothing else. All the design is flat and contained in one plane. There is no attempt, even with a simple intersection of lines, to give the

impression of a second plane; consequently, the men and beasts represented are shown, either facing us or in full profile; and are inserted within a system of straight lines, so that they are given a purely ornamental character.

Most interesting, under this aspect, is, for example, the representation of a man on horseback (table No. XXI). The horse is given in a full side view, yet showing all its four legs: the torso of the rider instead is represented in front, while his left leg, drawn on the body of the horse, is seen in profile. The exclusively ornamental character of these figures hinders this arrangement from being illogical or extravagant. The intersection of the planes, inevitable considering the subject, is purely accidental, not intended, and therefore, produces no effect of perspective.

Besides a few purely geometrical forms, among which, the rhomboid surrounded by hooks and the zig-zag line are the chief, the Italian peasant textiles draw their ornamental figures from the surroundings of rural life itself. Only in the oldest specimens do we find representations of fabulous heraldic or exotic animals. The elephant with the tower in the Pescocostanzo rugs is probably derived from a figure in the game of chess. The most ancient rugs of Pescocostanzo are, besides, those that more nearly approach ancient art and the art of the cities, and, in them, we do not always find a precise correspondence with the characteristics of peasant art determined above. In the said rugs of Pescocostanzo, a certain tendency to a more naturalistic interpretation of animal figures is sometimes manifested. But, beside them, there exists an other group of textiles of Umbrian origin with formalized characteristics of style, more archaic, which rigidly follow the aesthetic principles already expounded, as all the products posterior to the rugs of Pescocostanzo. In all these woven stuffs, we find the peasant women preferring the representations of countrymen, domestic animals and plants, the last being so formalized as to lose their individual character. These formalized representations of plants, laden with leaves and fruits,

are of unsurpassable elegance and delightful originality. They can triumphantly stand comparison with the contemporary products of Persian weavers. All the ground is sown with formalized flowers, the peasant girls carry them in their hands, the birds in their beaks. Religious symbols are very frequent; among them, the most common are the figure of the Paschal Lamb, the symbol of the name of Jesus, and a schematic representation of the menstrance. Very typical is also the heraldic motive of the two-headed eagle, found in almost all the covers.

An ingenuous spirit of poesy is evident in all those representations; the love of flowers, the joy in a quiet and simple life, an interest in all the little world of the girl-weaver. We see singing birds on every branch, we see sheep or fowl passing in long processions, or rows of vases with strange slender-stemmed plants. The forms dissolve into ornamental symbols, thus attenuating every incoherence between a vaguely organic world and purely abstract creations of geometrical figures, and abolishing every relation of dimension and proportion.

The composition of Italian peasant rugs is exceedingly varied. In the oldest specimens, the prevailing arrangement is that of figured horizontal strips, divided by a series of narrow rows of different colours, but without any pattern. The border is very narrow and is found only on the sides parallel to the warp. The two narrower sides end in a series of narrow parallel stripes without any pattern. This style of composition is analogous to that used in the blue and white napkins of Perugia and Assisi; and, considering also the resemblance of the heraldic motives, of an archaic style, common to these two categories of textiles, we are inclined to put forward the hypothesis of a common Umbrian origin. The rugs of Pescocostanzo present two schemes of composition. The central space comprehends almost all the surface of the web, leaving room only for a narrow border which imitates a motive of bone-lace, and then the central ground is divided by a system of rhomboids, each

of which frames the figure of a centaur, a syren, the fountain of love, an animal, or even of four beasts grouped together, or again, a very broad rich border surrounds the central space without any design. In the southern regions of Abruzzo, confining with Molise, we also find the first of these schemes of composition with this variation: the rhomboids are used preferably to frame floreal motives. The second type is modified in this, that the central space is never left completely empty. Either it is animated with scattered motives of animals or flowers, or it is arranged in rows, or subdivided into three parts, of which the central one is in the form of a square or a lozenge, decorated in the usual way, while the other two are each taken up by two vases from which issues a plant rich in branches, symmetrically arranged and laden with leaves, flowers, and fruit. On the branches, and on the top of these plants, we see birds swinging. Such an arrangement is much liked and is found with numerous variations. The sumptuous border is also formed of a row of lozenges the corners of which are filled with formalized figures of animals; and it runs all round the centre-piece. On the outer side it nearly always has an edge imitating pointed bone-lace, or consisting in a row of formalized animal or floreal motives. This group is distinguished for the fine proportions of the centre and the border.

Another group of rugs, extraordinarily beautiful, and rather oblong in form, the origin of which I have not yet been able to settle precisely, (the antiquaries generally call them Calabrian, but in the whole of Calabria I have not succeeded in finding anything like them and I rather imagine they were woven in the district of Benevento) follow an arrangement resembling that of the Umbrian group. The central ground is covered with rows of animals, plants, riders etc. and then divided into rectangles or squares occupying all its width, of which the central is the most important. It nearly always contains a large double-headed eagle which is occasionally of a Byzantine-Romanic character, and

sometimes more realistic. Calabrian covers, instead, prefer the division of the central space into rows or rhomboids. In Sardinian rugs, on the other hand, the central space, which is generally without a border, is considered as a whole, and is covered either by a single geometrical design, or a by a vegetal motive with ramifications over all its surface. On the narrow sides, this principal space is limited by one or two transverse stripes, animated by rows of men on horseback, animals etc.

For what regards colour-composition, it has been proved that mountainous regions and especially Abruzzo, as well as certain zones of Sardinia, prefer the harmonies of paler hues, while in the centres of production in the plains, or in the southern districts, contrasts of bright colours are desired. The oldest rugs have, as basis, a harmony of yellow, azure and red. The azure is generally light, yet intense, and often assumes a greenish-turquoise colour: the yellow is, in contrast with contemporary maiolica, rather pale almost cream, the red is either a brick red or slightly opaque. On the ground, white is the prevailing colour, and it often takes a vague cream shade. The rugs of Pescocostanzo and of Abruzzo show instead a preference for dark blue or brown backgrounds (in various shades but preferably opaque); sometimes, but rarely, we find the ground of a brick-red, or rusty red, or creamy white. In the design, white predominates; then come, in order of taste, cream ochre, pale green, hay-colour, bottle-green, a bright indigo blue, a wine-red (not used either in ancient rugs or in those of recent times) and a turkey-red. These colours produce warm-toned harmonies. Extraordinarily beautiful is the effect of a bright indigo-blue on a brown, almost chocolate-colour, foundation, or Bordeaux red on pale blue.

The strips of thick wool (intended to cover the so-called Bolognese tables and refectory, size m. $3 \times 0,90$) to which I am inclined to attribute a southern but not Calabrian origin, have almost always a bottle-green foundation and more rarely a black

one. In the design, the predominating colour is yellow, along with white, purplish red, and rare traces of indigo blue. The lively contrast of green and yellow, or of black and yellow is equally typical of this group, as are the form and the motive of the two-headed eagle as centre of the composition. In the textiles of the Campania (the centre of the Arpino) production, the ground is dark blue and the design bright yellow. The Calabrian covers of silk, or silk waste, have nearly always a red ground, which, however, is not found in the oldest specimens of the best period, never glaring, but with dull hues predominating, as rusty red or chocolate-colour. Less frequently, we find specimens with a ground mignonette-green black, pale blue, or dull blue, a white foundation existing only in modern specimens. The design carried out in glossy silk on an opaque foundation, is generally in white, yellow and two shades of blue: green, black, and wine-red are only exceptional.

The chromatic scale in Sardinian rugs and covers is exceedingly varied. Beside arrangements of dark gloomy colours, as of dark rusty red, with dark blue or black, there are frequently violent contrasts especially of black and yellow (which in modern products takes on an unpleasing sulphuric hue), or harmonies of gay colours which twist round them with lively and varied effects. One characteristic speciality of Sardinian peasant rugs is supplied by the common habit of executing the design in the central space in dark harmonizing tints which almost produce the effect of monochromy while, the transverse stripes at the extremity of the narrow ends, seem to burst into a strange bright glow of lively colours. The white, generally chosen for the ground, accentuates still more that vague restlessness, typical of the colouring in most Sardinian textiles.

We shall here add a few observations on the form of Italian woven rugs. As the loom used by Italian peasants does not allow webs to be produced wider than from 90 to 100 centimetres, the largest rugs are always made of two widths in Abruzzo or of three in

Calabria and Sardinia. The width of the most ancient webs is never more than 66 centimetres. As the breadths that form a rug are woven successively, it sometimes happens that the second is only a copy of the first, instead of being, as its composition demands, its counterpart; that is so to say, its image, as if reflected in a mirror. If the two breadths are sewed together, the design of one half produces the effect of being on the wrong side. Such careless work, as well as the different length of the pieces, which produces ugly transverse creases, does not appear in the very ancient stuffs, always most accurately wrought, but is already visible in rugs belonging to the eighteenth century.

In conclusion, the textile art of central Italy (from Umbria to the Basilicata), both for its aesthetic merits, and for the quality of the materials it uses, and the technical perfection of its workmanship, has a right to the highest place among the regions producing figured textures. The woven stuffs of Sardinia give us perhaps a greater profusion of styles, but certainly not such fine taste, either in the arrangement of the colours, in the planning of the design or in the choice of the materials for the ground work, which are often very poor. But, notwithstanding such differences, which cannot escape the eye of an observer, the continental and the insular peasant textile art form a unity of style, founded on the same aesthetic principles, and making use of the same ornamental expression.





IV.

TO-DAY, Italian peasant art is dead or, what is worse it has become a caricature, a falsification of that glorious art which is taking up our attention. With this assertion of mine I, in no wise, mean to deny the merit of those noble ladies who have dedicated themselves to the mission of reviving Italian textile art, and among whom is worthy of the greatest praise the Lady at the head of the "Industrie femminili riunite,,. They provide the female population of poor regions with a useful and profitable occupation, and afford the amateur an opportunity of observing more or less exact copies of the fine old specimens of weaving. But this is not the question. Even the Italian home industry has been unable to sustain for long, the struggle against the cheap products of bad taste which issue from the mills, and has been forced to succumb.

Wherever the ancient loom of Abruzzo or Ciociaria is still at work, it is only used for the production of thick woollen stuffs for clothes. It is worse in Calabria and Sardinia. As the Calabrian costume, though it still preserves all the parts and characteristics of the old one, is by an attentive eye seen to be a falsification of the latter, its parts, except the "red cloth,, and the striped kerchief

worn on the head, being produced by machinery and having nothing in common with the old colours and patterns which they mean to imitate, so the same false resemblance between the old and the new is found in the products of textile art, in this region, and more especially in Longobucco, where the ancient loom is still generally used.

When, two years ago, I visited this village, situated on the eastern slopes of the Sila, and made inquiries of a notable personage in the neighbourhood, concerning the production of rugs in the antique pattern, he replied that, in fact, similar designs had been used in olden times, but the use of them by now had fallen away, as they were "rough and primitive,,, and had been substituted by much finer workmanship. I immediately had an opportunity of forming an opinion of the significance of this statement. In various houses I saw a large quantity of quite new covers. They were wrought in cotton instead of in silk; their colours offered a series of samples of chemical products of the worst quality, arranged so as to make their glaring effect most striking, and many of which had already stained the white ground or lost their colour in the sun. But still more deplorable, perhaps, was the deterioration seen in the design. Either the central space was decorated with roses, realistically interpreted in uncertain shades, or with a vegetal motive, developing in ample curves with perfectly naturalistic leaves, among which deer could be seen bounding.

On the borders, appeared the typically Persian motive with palms in a vibrated modern rendering, or an ugly motive of a stiff tendril very common in machinery - produced fabrics. It was easy for me to find the explanation of the enigma. In the house of the woman, the best weaver in the village, the same who in the show of 1911, had exhibited a whole series of rugs, I found a collection of patterns cut out from modern fashion reviews, as well as a book of Natural History, the illustrations of which were used by her as models for the hunting-rugs, by which in the exhibition of 1911, she had

obtained such great success, perhaps just because they had nothing whatever to do with real peasant art and offered to the eye the usual forms, the usual colours.

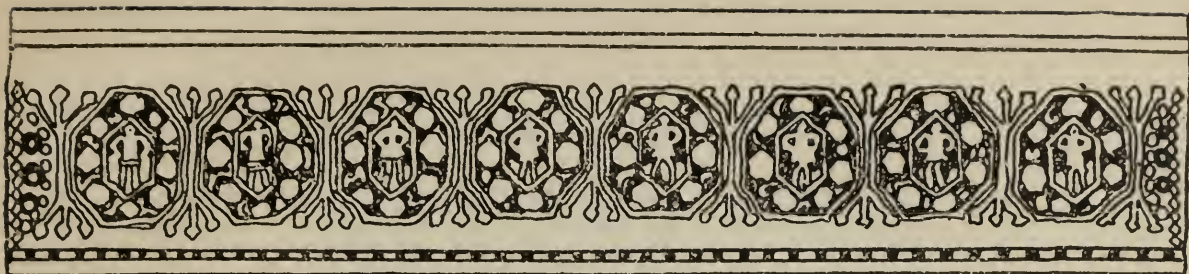
Another falsification of this kind is, for instance, the green cover reproduced by Arata in the "Dedalo", (Year I, No. 11) on page 22. And yet, at Longobucco, we saw two very beautiful old covers belonging to the family Citino, which prove that a very different taste formerly prevailed in the local production, and that the peasant women in their weaving, now avail themselves also of ancient geometrical designs or of motives of formalized tendrils, animated by birds, mixing them, however with alien elements, so as to form a very ugly heterogeneous whole.

Unhappily the case of Longobucco is typical of all the modern products of peasant textile art, in Italy. In regions, where formerly there flourished a most original textile industry, the peasants willingly change the antique covers, even if in a perfect state of preservation, for modern ones produced by machinery. They find the work of their ancestors ugly; they too wish to have fine covers like those used in town. It is therefore absolutely useless to cause the old looms to resume their work and to hope for the revival of ancient peasant art. The women may weave servile copies of ancient treasures, as far as it is possible, considering our ignorance of the old methods of dyeing, but they will never again create anything in the ancient spirit. Their tradition is broken — their taste corrupted: Not even Italian peasant art has been able to avoid the fate which struck not only the applied art of Europe to death but also that of the East, even of the extreme East.

And yet notwithstanding this, we believe that the mission of this time-long and honoured art, is not yet ended. Besides the aesthetic enjoyment this art bestows on collectors of fine taste, my study may help to improve modern applied art, which, considering the absolutely democratic tenor of our material life, must absolutely avoid all solutions referring to the conditions of surroundings

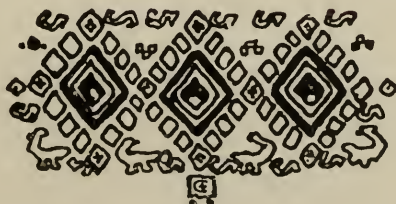
too dissimilar from those, simple but not poor, for which the weavers of former times, produced their work. We know that the applied art of Vienna found a rich source of inspiration in the treasures of the popular art of the Hungarians, Slovenes, Roumanians and Slovacks. We do not see why similar beneficent influences should be excluded in Italy. But above all, a less superficial acquaintance with those precious creations of the natural stylistic sensibility of Italian peasants might combat against that valuation of applied art and that super-appreciation of so-called pure art, in which, in our humble opinion, lies the absurdity of the artistic movement of our times. When the invention of machinery took away the occupation of all those who, under the guidance of a time-old technical and aesthetic tradition, were able to make their aptitude, however limited, fruitful in creating beautiful things, they began to practise "pure art,, and, above all, that branch of it, which technically, seemed easiest; namely, oil - painting. And these artificers, led astray, all assume airs of genuises, with the fine intuition that only a genius could create works of aesthetic value, such as to justify the absolute uselessness of oil - paintings. And the sacred rights of genius were the pretext for that wearisome and encumbering over - production of pictures, without any other reason or aim, than that of filling the pockets of astute speculators and of populating those cemeteries called Galleries of Modern Art. It is certainly easier to sit down before a landscape or a tired and wearied model, or put together on a table some bits of china, apples, or flowers, and attempt to reproduce such things in oil-colours on a bit of canvas, than it is to construct a piece of furniture, weave a rug, or make one of those bits of china or earthenware. Only, even a piece of furniture or an ugly rug can always be put to some useful purpose, while a mediocre picture not only gives no joy, but will be considered, seeing its absolutely superfluous nature, as a troublesome, alien, and encumbering element. Who, among the innumerable thousands of works of art, manufactured, every year,

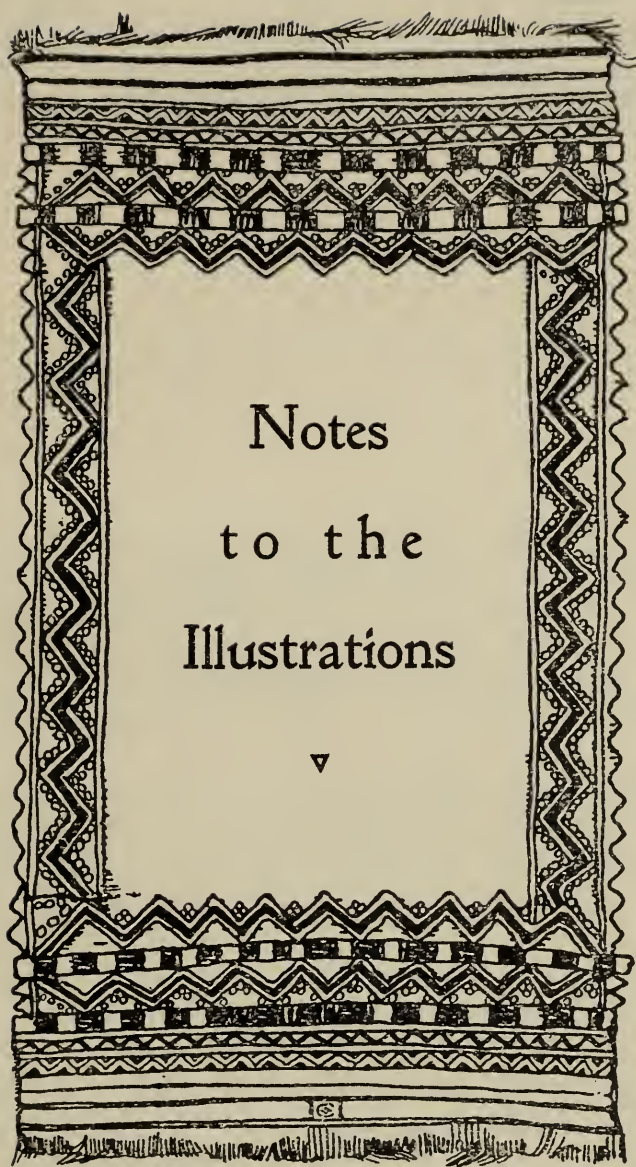
succeeds in finding only one, before which (leaving out snobbish cant) he feels, I will not say that thrill though his spine, a physical symptom of profound psychical emotion, but simply a pleasing stimulus of his optic nerve, is indeed to be considered fortunate. On the other hand, we fail to understand the mentality of a public pretending to possess sensibility enough to discover and enjoy aesthetic values in a mediocre picture, while they support the ugliness of innumerable articles in common use, of the worst taste, without being affected by a physical disgust which makes contact with them unbearable. And let no one tell me that art in trade cannot bear up against purely mechanical production. He who can throw away thousands on a "work of art,, which only satisfies his vanity, can quite well afford the luxury of purchasing a beautiful hand-wrought article, instead of a common machine-made product; a luxury compensated not only by the aesthetic enjoyment it affords, but also by the superior technical qualities of the article. Fortunately, it appears that the present economical crisis has in itself the power of directing our modern artistic production towards less absurd manifestations. The impossibility of selling the oil-encrusted productions "de luxe,, and the encumbering plastic objects, will oblige the artist to dedicate himself once more to applied art and give us the nourishment we lack, while awaiting the genius who will really be able to bestow on us perfect and imperishable works of value. The contempt, manifested by artists for applied art (and we mean by this, material workmanship) is simply a mask for their incapacity for work less easy than that of smudging a bit of fine white canvas in more or less clumsily imitating the objects that surround us. When these observations of ours are acknowledged to be just, it will no longer be necessary, for a humble book like this to beg that some little attention may be bestowed on peasant Italian art by a distraught, mistrusting, and incredulous public.



BIBLIOGRAPHY

- G. PITRÈ. *Illustrated Catalogue of the Sicilian Ethnographical Exhibition*. Palermo 1891-92.
- P. PICCIRILLI. *The exhibition of Antique Abruzzese Art in Chieti*. « Rivista Abruzzese », XX (1905) and XXI (1906) - « Catalogue of Italian Ethnography Exhibition », Rome, 1911. Arti Grafiche of Bergamo, 1911.
- CATERINA BINETTI-VERTUA. *Laces and Sicilian Women*. Hoepli, Milan 1911.
- FRANCESCO BALDESSARONI. *Italian Ethnography at the exhibition of Rome* « Emporium », 1911 II, 305-19.
- PEASANT ART IN ITALY. Special number of the « Studio », London, 1913.
- ELISA RICCI. *Female industries. The Works of our Peasant*. « Emporium », 1914, I, 120-132.
- CLELIA PELLICANO. *Italian female Industries*. Pilade Rocco, Milan.
- ADOLFO DE KAROLIS. *Italian Popular Art*. « La Fionda », August, 1920.
- GIULIO ARATA. *Sardinian Peasant Art*. « Dedalo », year I, n. XI-XII and year II, n. II.
- REMIGIO STRINATI. *The Italian Exhibition of Decorative Art at Stockholm*. « Rassegna d'Arte », VII, of 4th April 1921.





Notes
to the
Illustrations





TABLE No. I. — For this carpet, woven in the fashion of tapestry, see the text. The fact that the carpet printed in the table No. XXIII *b*, which undoubtedly comes from Castel di Sangro, shows in the technique of the ground, woven too in the fashion of tapestry, and in the equally cold tones, notwithstanding the great difference of the pattern, some surprising analogies, gives us perhaps some hints as to the origin of the strip here reproduced. Date end of the XVI or beginning of the XVII century. Collection of Giorgio Sangiorgi, Rome.

TABLES Nos. II and III. — Of these two carpets we have spoken diffusely in the text. The one reproduced in trichromy is in a private collection in Rome. Same origin as that of table No. XXIII namely, a village of the "Terra di Lavoro". The dimensions of the specimen owned by Dr. Wagner are 1,80 m. \times 1,24 m. Both specimens 150 years old, or even more.

TABLES Nos. IV *a* and IV *b*. — These two strips come from the south of the Abruzzi, confining with Umbria. Dimensions of N. IV *a*: 1,89 m. \times 0,59 m. of N. IV *b*: 2,75 m. \times 0,62 m. Both in a private collection, Rome. End of the XV or beginning of the XVI century.

TABLES Nos. V and VI. — Carpet of the north of the Abruzzi, and detail of the same. Bought at the sale of M. Maccari, painter. Dimensions: 2,25 m. \times 1,67 m. The carpet is in three breadths. Notwithstanding its archaic character, it cannot have been woven earlier than the XVII century, as is proved by the dresses of the villagers. The material used is wool.

TABLE No. VII. — Detail of a "bancale", (meant to decorate a wedding-chest). in a private collection, Rome. Belongs to the type of the north of the Abruzzi, when under the influence of Umbria. Dimensions: 1,85 m. \times 0,57 m. Material, wool; it belongs to the end of the XVI century (?).

TABLE No. VIII. — This carpet is woven, that is to say that the thread forming the pattern runs through all the breadth of the warp, behind or before according to the requirements of the composition, as in the brocades and the blue-and-white napkins of Umbria. Material,

wool. This specimen belongs to the Loria collection (the future Roman Ethnographical Museum) and comes from the neighbourhood of Aquila. Dimensions: 2,38 m. \times 0,93 m. The ground is of a brick-red colour. The pattern is of alternative stripes of white, yellow, green and indigo. About 250 years old.

TABLE No. IX. — Carpet of Pescocostanzo, belonging to the Loria collection. Dimensions: 2,64 m. \times 1,20 m. Only one breadth. Material, wool. About 150 years old.

TABLE No. X. — Carpet of Pescocostanzo, belongs to the Agricultural Administration (Rome). About 150 years old.

TABLE No. XI. — Fragment of a carpet of Pescocostanzo. XVIII century; belongs to M. De Donne, Pescocostanzo.

TABLE No. XII. — Carpet of Pescocostanzo, belonging to M. Del Zio, Castel di Sangro. About 150 years old.

TABLE No. XIII. — Detail of a horse-bag of Pescocostanzo, Loria Collection. Material, wool. Dimensions: 1,37 m. \times 0,44 m. About sixty years old. A decidedly older horse-bag in the same collection bears the date of 1839.

TABLE No. XIV. — Heavy woollen blanket of the south of the Abruzzi, of two breadths. Private collection, Rome. Dimensions: 2,40 m. \times 1,70 m. About 150 years old.

TABLE No. XV. — Woollen blanket of the south of Abruzzi; two breadths: the ground is blue; the pattern, white, yellow, ochre, grey-green and wine-red. Dimensions: 2,80 m. \times 1,70 m. About 150 years old. Private collection, Rome.

TABLE No. XVI. — Woollen blanket of the south of Abruzzi; two breadths: ground dark-brown, pattern white, yellow, ochre, green and wine-red. Dimensions: 2,70 \times 1,88 m. About 100 years old. Private collection, Rome.

TABLE No. XVII. — Woollen blanket of south of Abruzzi, two breadths. Ground creamy-white; pattern yellow, olive-green, brick-red and dark indigo. Dimensions: 2,38 \times 1,70 m. About 120 years old. Private collection, Rome.

TABLES Nos. XVIII *a* and XVIII *b*. — “Bancali,, or chest-covers of the south of Abruzzi. Material, wool. N. XVIII *a* was at the Exhibition of Stockholm, 1920. N. XVIII *b* belongs to a private collection, Rome. The dimensions of the latter are 2 \times 0,85 m. The ground is of a rosy-brick colour. The pattern is white, olive-green and dark indigo. N. XVIII *a* is about so years old. N. XVIII *b* about 120.

TABLE No. XX *a*. — Detail of a woollen blanket of the the south Abruzzi, exhibited at Stockholm. Dimensions of the whole blanket: 2,80 \times 1,90 m. Ground dark blue. About 80 years old. No. XIX *b*. Detail of a woollen blanket of the south of Abruzzi, belonging to a private collection (Rome). Ground dark brown. Dimensions: 2,48 \times 1,56 m. About 80 years old.

TABLE No. XX *a*. — Detail of a blanket of the south of Abruzzi; private collection, Rome. Ground brick-red. Pattern in white, yellow, ochre, green and dark indigo. The blanket is signed: Maria Ruscitti (the weaver?). Dimensions: 3,20 \times 1,85 m. Middle of XIX century. N. XX *b*. Detail of the carpet given on plate N. XXI *a*.

TABLES Nos. XXI *a* and XXI *b*. — Two woollen carpets of the “Terra di Lavoro,,. Dimensions: 2,97 m. \times 0,99 m., 2,88 m. \times 0,92 m. XVIII century. Private collection, Rome.

TABLE Nos. XXII *a* and XXII *b*. — Details of the carpets given on plates XXI *a* and XXIII *a*.

TABLE No. XXIII *a*. — Woollen carpet of the “Terra di Lavoro”, signed D. Domenico Bruno (owner?). Dimensions: 3,30 m. \times 0,90 m. About a century old. The ground is black, the pattern white, yellow and red. Private collection, Rome. Two splendid specimens of this type were exhibited at Stockholm. Table No. XXIII *b*. Table-cover (?), ground in the fashion of tapestry, pattern woven in the usual way. Comes from Castel di Sangro, belongs to M. Giorgio Sangiorgi, Rome. See note to table No. I. Is of the XVII century.

TABLE No. XXIV. — Detail of a woollen carpet of Arpino. Through consisting only of two colours, it is woven with the usual technique, that is to say that the thread forming the pattern is not shot through all the breadth of the warp as in the specimen given at table No. VIII *b*. at that it follows the lines of the pattern through the threads of the woof. The whole carpet consists of three breadths (3,06 \times 2,28 m.): each of them repeating the same pattern; they have no border. Private collection, Rome. About 100 years old.

TABLES Nos. XXV and XXVI. — Details of silk covers (“bavella”, and “capisciola”,) of Calabria. About 100 year old, with the exception of table No. XXVI *a*, of more recent date and not such careful work. In the specimens reproduced on table No. XXVI, two, the ground is red, carmine for *a*, and pale brick for *b*. All these covers belong to private collectors in Rome. A specimen very similar to table No. XXV *a*, but on a pale-reseda ground, which I happened to see at an antiquary's in Rome; bears the signature of the weaver: Lucrezia Cumana.

TABLE No. XXVII. — This white linen bed cover, of which we give a detail, is of Sicilian origin (Caltagirone) and belongs to the Loria collection. It consists of three breadths, and its dimensions are 2,75 \times 2,50 m. Covers of the same kind have been woven in Calabria (Gimigliano), and in different spots of Italy, but chiefly in Sardinia. In the collection Loria we find a great number of these Sardinia bed-covers, coming from Salorì, Oristano, Gadonì, Sinnai. Some of them the date, for instance No. 27768 (1810), No. 6465 (1789) and No. 6513 (1859). Notwithstanding the distance between the dates, no development of style is visible, but the work is much more careful in the older specimens.

TABLES Nos. XXVIII and XXIX. — Details of bed-covers of Sardinia. The technique used is quite the same as in the cover given on table No. XXVII. The pattern is woven in wool. The colour of the pattern is a dark brownish red. Both specimens belong to the Loria collection. The one given on table No. XXVIII was bought at Ossi, the other one at Isili. From 60 to 80 years old.

TABLE No. XXX *a*. — Chest-cover of Sardinia, belonging to the “Industrie Femminili Italiane”, a Rome. Table No. XXX *b*. Chest-cover of Sardinia (Barotoli) of the Loria collection. Dimensions: 2,15 \times 0,70 m. Both covers must have been woven early in the XIX century.

TABLES Nos. XXXI *a* and XXXI *b*. — Chest-covers of Sardinia. Collection Di Scano (Cagliari). Middle of the XIX century.



The Tables



Table I.



Table II.



Table III.



a

b

Table IV.

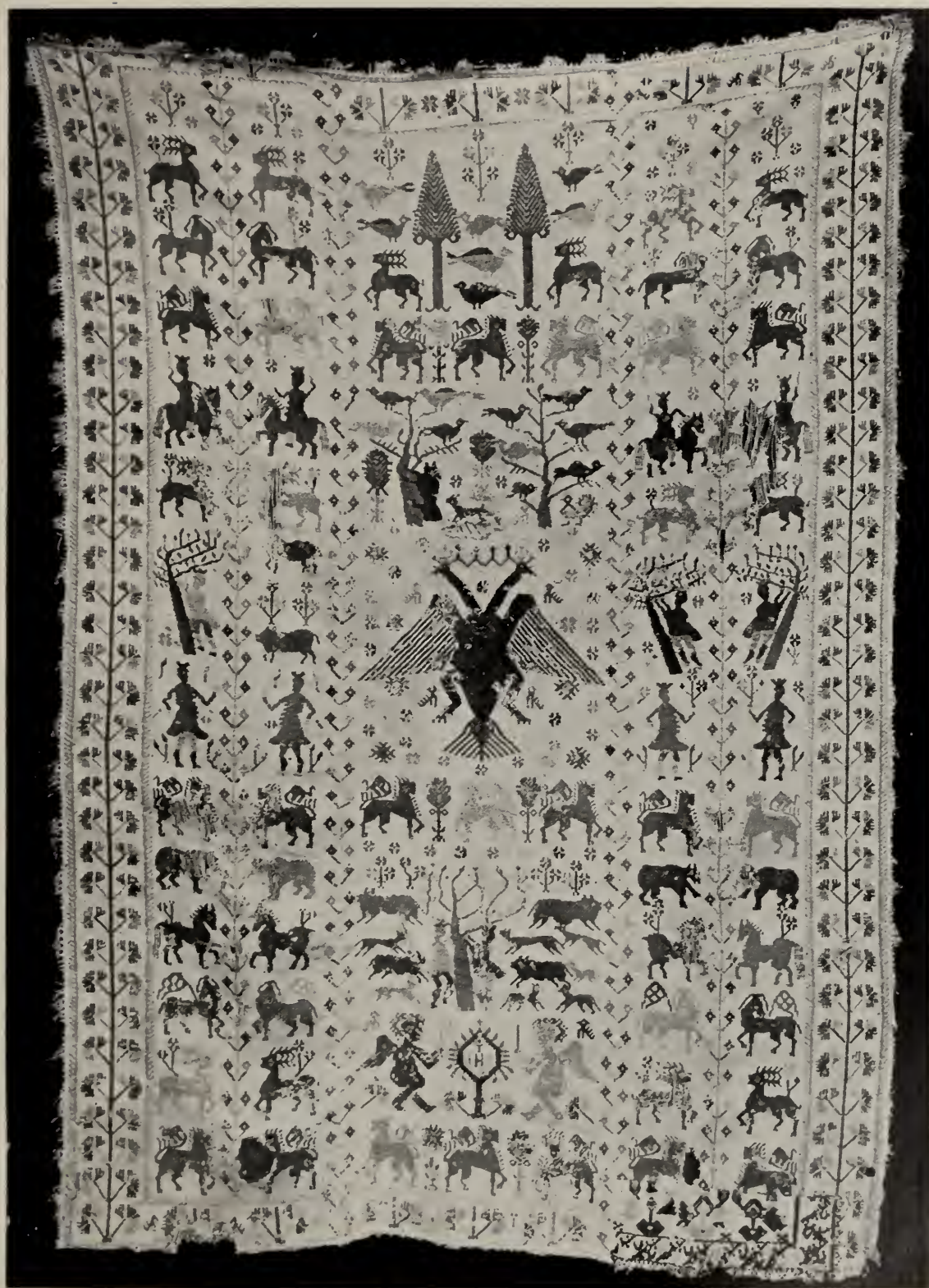


Table V.



Table VI.



Table VII.



Table VIII.



Table IX.

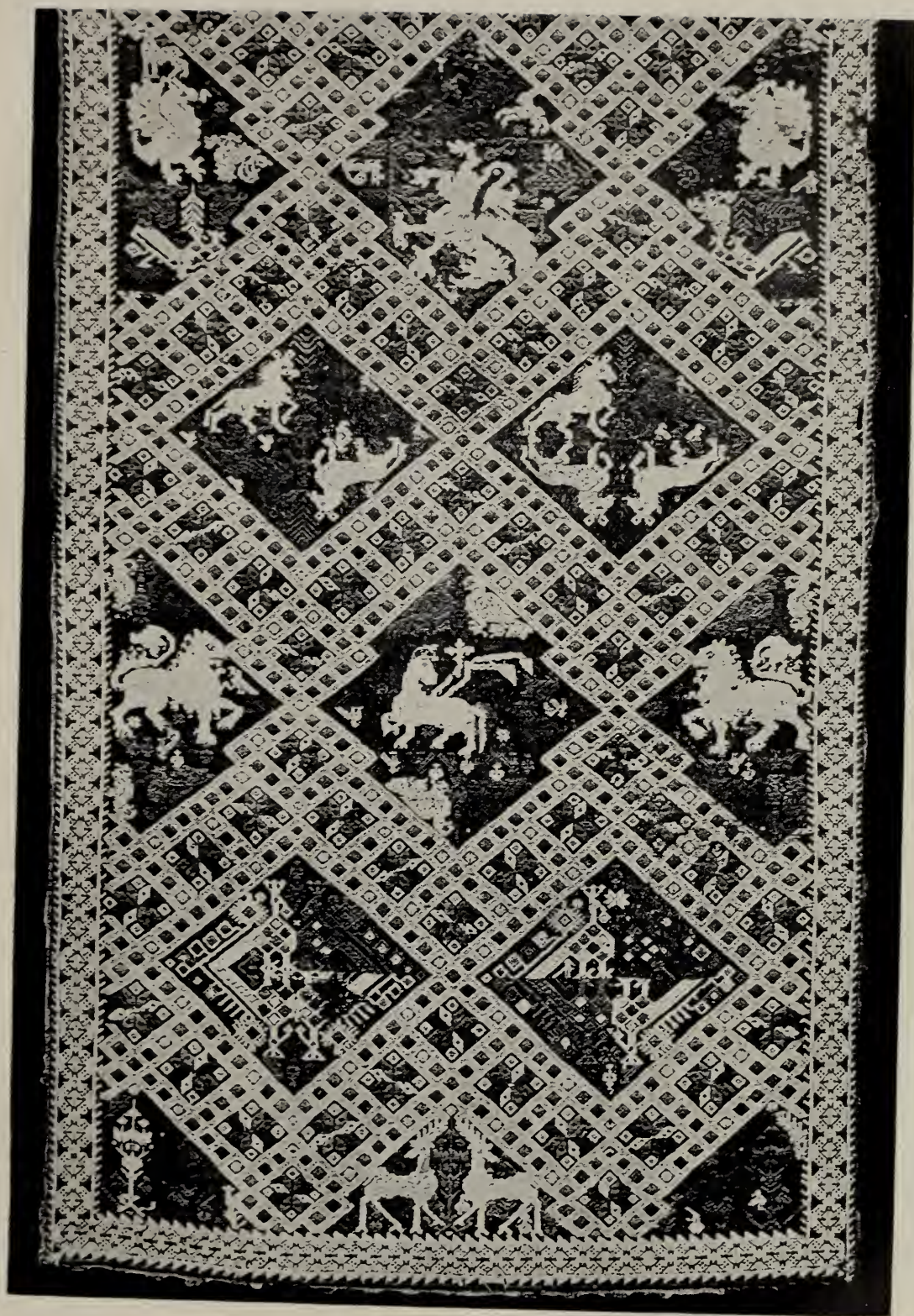


Table X.



Table XI.



Table XII.



Table XIII.



Table XIV.



Table XV.

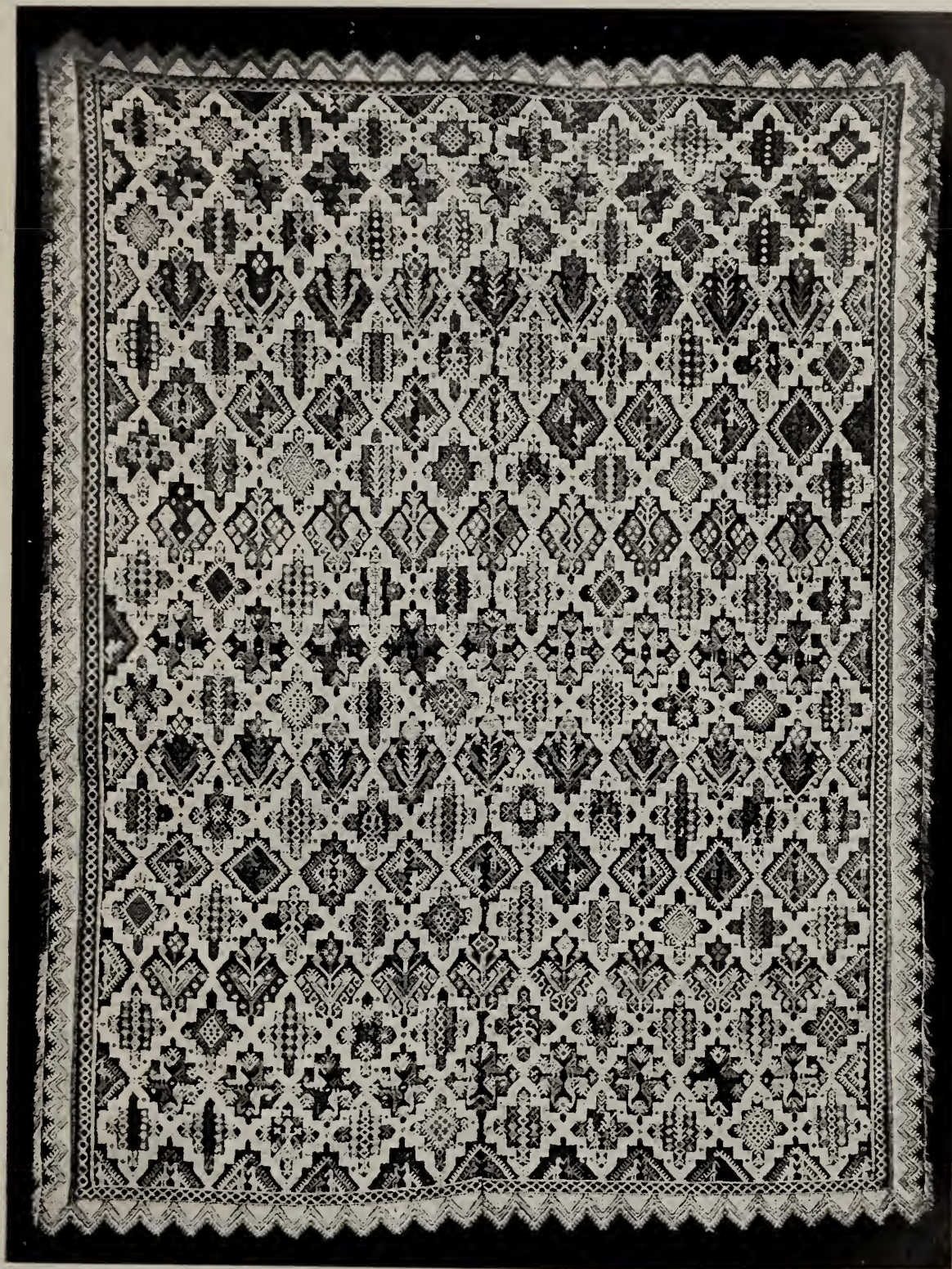


Table XVI.



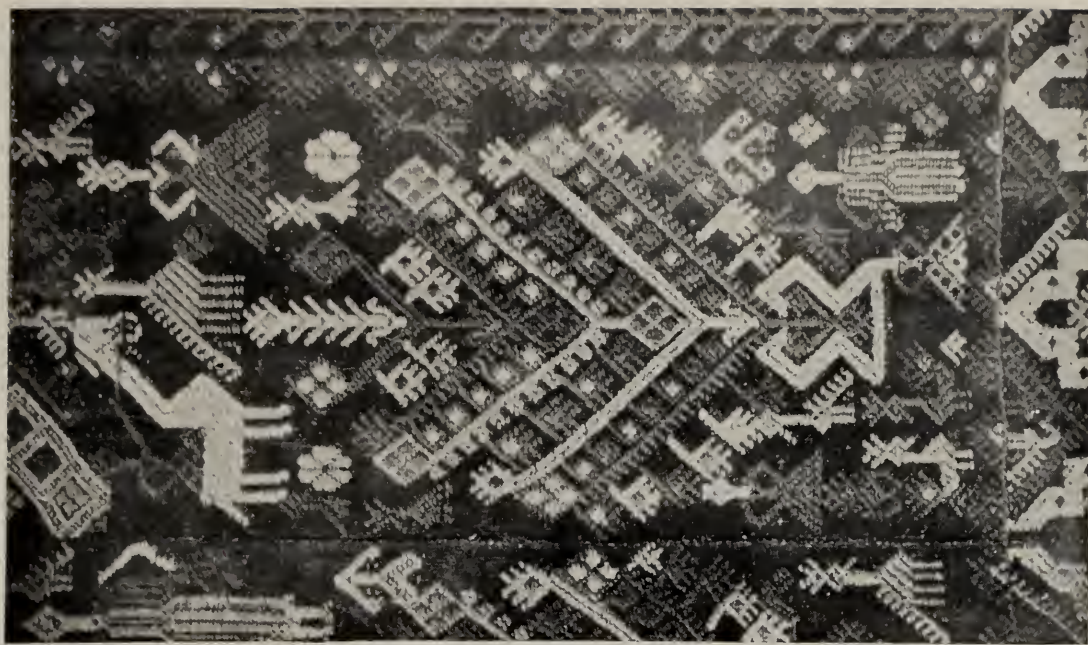
Table XVII.



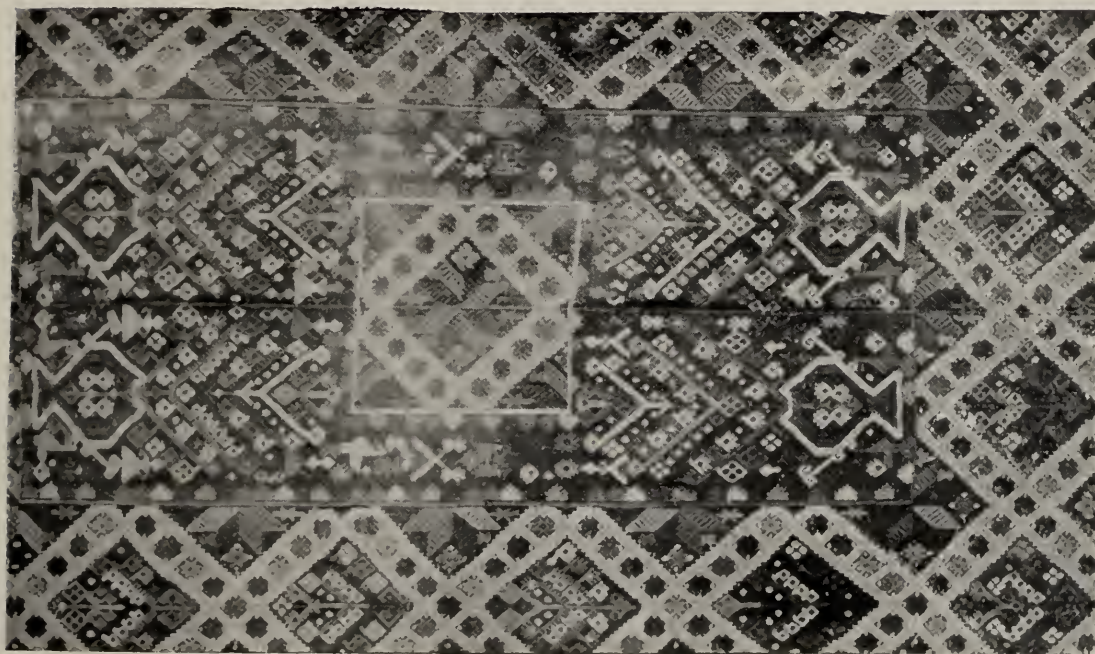
a

b

Table XVIII.



b

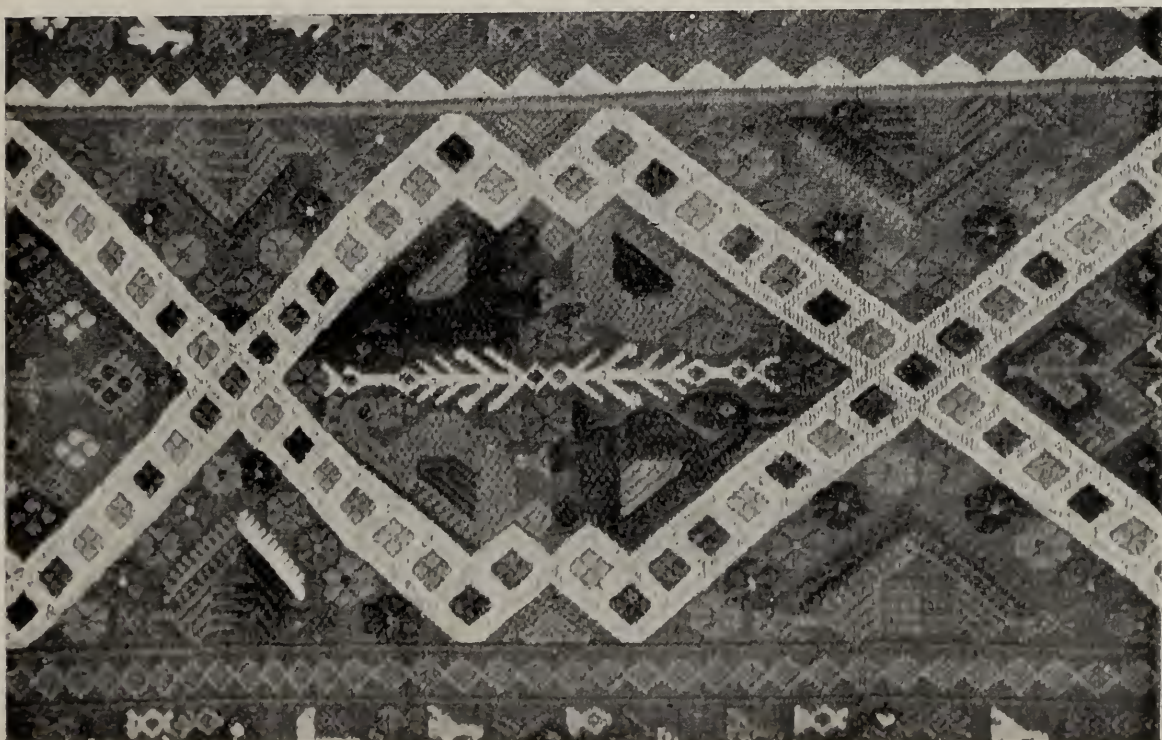


a

Table XIX.



b



a

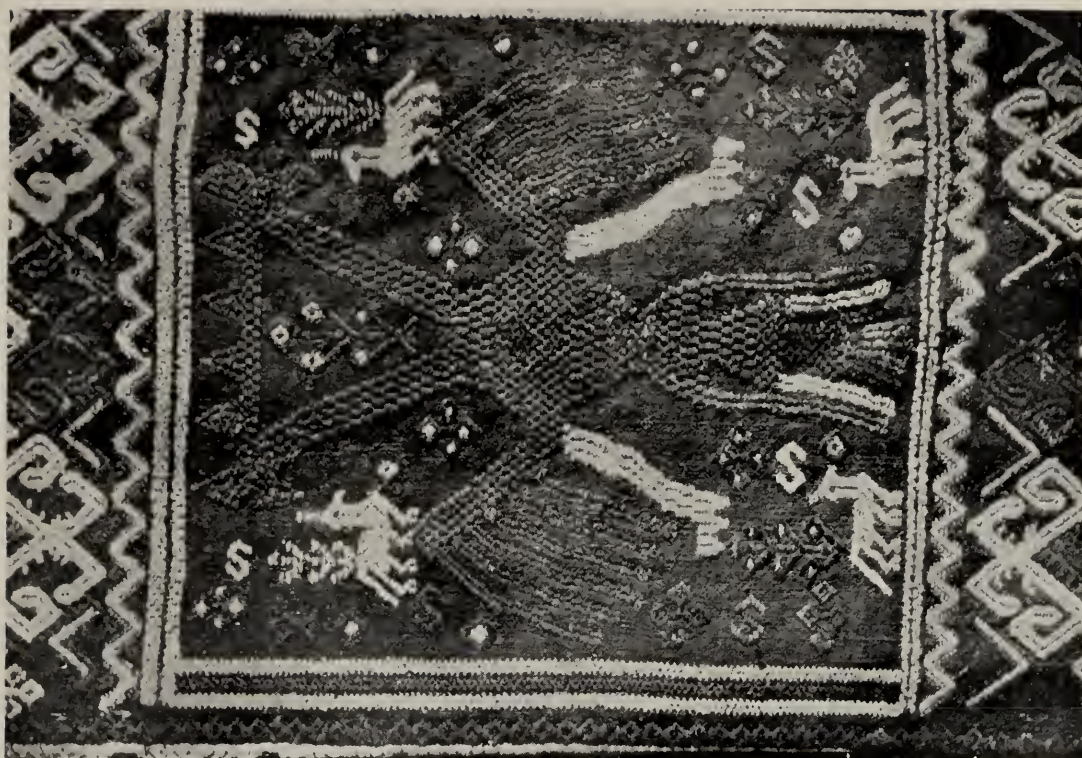
Table XX.



a

b

Table XXI.



a



b

Table XXII.



a

b

Table XXIII.



Table XXIV.



Table XXV.



a

b

Table XXVI.



Table XXVII.



Table XXVIII.



Table XXIX.



b

a

Table XXX.



a

b

Table XXXI.





STERLING & FRANCINE CLARK ART INSTITUTE
NK2852 .S18 E
Sautier, Albert/Italian peasant rugs



3 1962 00074 3801

PRINTED IN ITALY

